

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method for evaluating a plurality of options comprising the steps of:
 - a) selecting and accessing type 1 databases, DB^1_i , each of said selected databases DB^1_i including at least one option rating, $OR_i(x,n)$, for one of said options, x , with respect to a dimension n , where said option x can differ among said selected databases;
 - b) selecting and accessing type 2 databases DB^2_j , each of said type 2 databases DB^2_j including at least one database rating $DR_j(i)$ for at least one of said databases DB^1_i ;
 - c) associating weights, W_i with said databases DB^1_i , said weights W_i being calculated as a function of said database ratings $DR_j(i)$; and
 - d) calculating an overall rating $R(m,n)$ for an option m with respect to said dimension n as a function of said weights W_i and option ratings $OR_i(m,n)$;
 - e) repeating step d for each remaining one of said options for which there exists at least one option rating with respect to said dimension n ; and
 - f) generating a list of said options and associated overall ratings with respect to dimension n .
2. (Original) A method as described in claim 1 where said function of said weights W_i and said option ratings $OR_i(m,n)$ is:
$$R(m,n) = \sum_i (W_i \cdot \text{Norm}(OR_i(m,n))) / \sum_i W_i;$$
 - a) where $\text{Norm}(OR_i(m,n))$ is a normalization of said option ratings $OR_i(m,n)$, and
 - b) summation \sum_i ranges over all of said type 1 databases DB^1_i for which said option ratings $OR_i(m,n)$ are defined.

3. (Original) A method as described in claim 2 where said option ratings $OR_i(m,n)$ are normalized with respect to a maximum rating $OR_i(max)$ and a minimum satisfactory rating $OR_i(sat)$ for each of said selected type 1 databases DB^1_i .
4. (Original) A method as described in claim 2 where, if said option rating $OR_i(m,n)$ is less than said minimum satisfactory $OR_i(sat)$, said normalization, $Norm(OR_i(m,n))$ is set equal to a predetermined value; said predetermined value being less than a normalized minimum satisfactory rating $Norm(OR_i(sat))$.
5. (Original) A method as described in claim 2 where said function of said database ratings $DR_j(i)$ is:
- $$W_i = \sum_j (MW_j \cdot Norm(DR_j(i))) / \sum_j MW_j;$$
- a) where $Norm(DR_j(i))$ is a normalization of said database ratings $DR_j(i)$, and
- b) summation \sum_j ranges over all of said type 2 databases DB^2_j for which said option ratings $DR_j(i)$ are defined; and
- c) MW_j are master weights associated with said type 2 databases DB^2_j .
6. (Original) A method as described in claim 5 where said database ratings DR^2_j are normalized with respect to a maximum rating $DR_j(max)$ and a minimum satisfactory rating $DR_j(sat)$ for each of said selected type 2 databases DB^2_j .
7. (Original) A method as described in claim 6 where, if one of said weights W_i is less than 0, said one weight is set equal to 0.
8. (Original) A method as described in claim 5 further comprising the step of adjusting said master weights MW_j based on a user's evaluation of said list.
9. (Original) A method as described in claim 8 where said adjusting step comprises the steps of:

- a) said user identifying a selected choice m' ;
- b) calculating a partial derivative $P(MW_j') = \partial F_{m',n'}(MW_j) / \partial MW_j'$; where $F_{m',n'}(MW_j)$ is the deviation of option rating $R(m',n)$ from the mean rating, $\Sigma_m R(m,n)/M$ as a function of master weights MW_j , where M is the total number of options for which $R(m,n')$ is defined;
- c) setting $MW_j' = MW_j(1 + \alpha P(MW_j'))$, where α is a small positive number; and
- d) repeating steps b and c for all remaining master weights MW_j .

10. (Original) A method as described in claim 8 where said adjusting step comprises the steps of:

- a) said user identifying a selected choice m' ;
- b) calculating a partial derivative $P(MW_j') = \partial F_{m',n'}(MW_j) / \partial MW_j'$; where $F_{m',n'}(MW_j)$ is the deviation of option rating $R(m',n)$ from the maximum rating, $\max(R(m,n))$ as a function of master weights MW_j ;
- c) setting $MW_j' = MW_j(1 + \alpha P(MW_j'))$, where α is a small positive number; and
- d) repeating steps b and c for all remaining master weights MW_j .

11. (Original) A method as described in claim 1 where said options are rated with respect to a plurality of dimensions, comprising the further step of repeating steps d and e for each remaining one of said dimensions.

12. (Original) A method as described in claim 11 further comprising the step of adjusting said master weights MW_j based on a user's evaluation of said list.

13. (Original) A method as described in claim 12 where said adjusting step comprises the steps of:

- a) said user identifying a selected choice m' and a critical dimension n' ;
- b) calculating a partial derivative $P(MW_j') = \partial F_{m',n'}(MW_j) / \partial MW_j'$; where $F_{m',n'}(MW_j)$ is the deviation of option rating $R(m',n')$ from the mean rating, $\Sigma_m R(m,n')/M$, along said

critical dimension n' , as a function of master weights MW_j , where M is the total number of options for which $R(m,n')$ is defined;

- c) setting $MW_j' = MW_j'(1 + \alpha P(MW_j'))$, where α is a small positive number; and
- d) repeating steps b and c for all remaining master weights MW_j .

14. (Original) A method as described in claim 12 where said adjusting step comprises the steps of:

- a) said user identifying a selected choice m' ;
- b) calculating a partial derivative $P(MW_j') = \partial F_{m',n'}(MW_j) / \partial MW_j'$; where $F_{m',n'}(MW_j)$ is the deviation of option rating $R(m',n)$ from the maximum rating, $\max(R(m,n))$ as a function of master weights MW_j ;
- c) setting $MW_j' = MW_j'(1 + \alpha P(MW_j'))$, where α is a small positive number; and
- d) repeating steps b and c for all remaining master weights MW_j .

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

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23. (Cancelled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Cancelled)